Surgeons at St. Peter's Reach Surgical Milestone
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St. Peter's Hospital is now the area's leading surgical center for minimally-invasive, robotic surgery as St. Peter's recently surpassed 1,000 operations using the da Vinci surgical system.

Surgeons at St. Peter's are successfully treating a wide variety of gynecological conditions -- both benign and cancerous -- as well as prostatectomies in men, using da Vinci's micro-technology. Instead of operating through large incisions in the abdominal wall, surgeons at St. Peter's can remotely control small surgical instruments, along with a high-resolution camera, through tiny incisions in a patient.

"The patient has less blood loss, risks fewer complications and can recover more quickly thanks to this advanced technology," Dr. Eileen Joyce of Upstate Ob/Gyn Associates said at a news conference today announcing the surgical milestone of 1,000 da Vinci procedures.

"Patients in the Capital Region no longer have to travel to New York City or Boston to find the best cancer care because of our long experience with the da Vinci system. Performing surgery that is complete and precise is just a better way to achieve a successful outcome and a faster recovery," said Dr. Daniel Kredentser, a gynecological oncologist with Women's Cancer Care Associates. Dr. Kredentser has performed the most da Vinci surgeries since the technology was brought to St. Peter's in 2004.

St. Peter's will soon be offering the newest and most-advanced version of the da Vinci system.

The da Vinci system at St. Peter's is also being used to remove cancers of the prostate. Dr. Theodore Chang and Dr. Michael Perrotti are two of the surgeons at Capital Region Urological Surgeons (CRUS) which has performed the most da Vinci prostatectomies of any surgical practice in the area, including 144 procedures in the past year. Dr. Chang is one of the area's most-experienced surgeons in performing radical prostatectomies using the da Vinci system.

With da Vinci surgeries at St. Peter's, 90 percent of prostate patients were home within 23 hours of surgery, said Dr. Perrotti. Blood transfusions were needed in only 1.4 percent of these cases, which is very low. This rivals outcomes anywhere in the country, Dr. Perrotti said.

"With the da Vinci system, we can be more precise in removing cancerous tissue and, as a result, we can help many patients avoid complications such as urinary incontinence following a prostatectomy," said Dr. Perrotti.

The American Cancer Society estimates there are 180,000 – 200,000 newly diagnosed cases of prostate cancer in the United States annually. Prostate cancer is the second leading cause of cancer death in men in the United States with approximately 40,000 men dying of it each year.

Also at today's news conference was Sharon Johnson, a teacher from Averill Park, who underwent a successful hysterectomy procedure performed by Dr. Joyce.

"It was amazing that I could feel so great so quickly," Mrs. Johnson said. Her surgery was in mid-August -- only weeks before the start of a new school year. In just two and half weeks, her recovery was nearly complete and she never missed a day of work.

Dr. Joyce said she hopes today's announcement will encourage more women to look into the advantages of da Vinci surgery versus traditional "open" surgeries. The older method, which requires a large incision through the abdomen, "is still used in a significant number of gyn surgeries in this area involving patients who could be candidates for laparoscopic surgery such as the da Vinci system," said Dr. Joyce.

Upstate Ob/Gyn Associates is located at 1365 Washington Ave. Women's Cancer Care Associates and Capital Region Urological Surgeons are located at 319 S. Manning Blvd. next to St. Peter's Hospital.